[B 393, B]

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"Yeah I had a couple of meetings for Onie. I helped her too. Except she would not do the things I told her to do. I made that cancer move around from her back where it hurt a lot. I got it around in front where it didn't hurt her so much. But she wouldn't keep doing the things I told her to do."

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These two incidents reveal traditional attitudes transferred into a new framework of curing. In the first place, illness is a corporeal object which can be manipulated--moved and (if one's power is sufficient) removed. Secondly, peyote is viewed as a manifestation of a spiritual power. The informant with gallstones did not attend meetings to have his ailment cured; rather, he used water and tobacco, traditional adjuncts to shamanistic curing. Moreover he did not take peyote for his illness; he simply prayed to Peyote in a manner very similar to praying to a spirit guardian for assistance.

Other shadows of the shamanistic past seem to lie heavily on the minds of modern Washo peyotists. In his discussion of peyotism, d'Azevedo (1957, pp. 624-626) describes in some detail the attitudes about the assistance or interference that one peyote singer or drummer may receive from another. The statements of his informants, although couched in different terms, are reminiscent of many I heard dealing with competitions between shamans.

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For several years peyotists were a powerful factor in the tribal council, and they were not loath to play upon the connection between peyote and poison parsnips in the minds of their cotribalists. The peyote button is considered to be a powerful agent and as such potentially dangerous. Therefore a man who could deal with this agent, just like a shaman who could eat the poison parsnip with impunity, was a man to be listened to and followed.

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Despite a belief in and a dependence on shamanistic curing or its latter-day counterpart, the peyote curing session, most Washo are willing patients of white doctors. This suggests that perhaps the old views are disappearing under the scientific certainty of Western medicine. Quite the reverse seems true, however. Every failure of white medicine strengthens the Indians' belief that the real source of curing power is a gift from nature. Every success is attributed to assistance the white men have received from Indians' power. When asked the direct question: "Why aren't there so many Indian doctors today?" my informant answered: "Well, Indians just don't need all that power today. The white doctors know a lot of things and can cure sickness pretty good. In the old days we didn't know them things so we had to have them real powers." This attitude, that nature provided whatever was necessary for Washo survival, crops up in other contexts which I will discuss later in this paper. Far from disappearing, the old notions seem to be maintaining a strong hold on the minds of the Washo. As the number of active peyotists dwindle (d'Azevedo and Merriam 1957), one gets the impression that the shamanistic forms may again become a more important part of Washo life.

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II

Beliefs about the causes of disease and curing methods depend to a great extent on supernatural power and ghosts. Soul loss, an encounter with a ghost, and sorcery are three causes of illness involving the supernatural. The first is apparently rare: the taking of the boy's soul by the water-baby in the Welukúshkush story recounted above is the only case we have recorded. Encounters with ghosts are more common. Our informants reported seven such encounters and made one general statement about this cause of sickness. The ghost causes illness, says Rupert, by "drying up the person's blood." It is possible, however, that ghosts kill by stealing a person's soul, for our informants often speak of the desire of the ghost to "take the relative back with him." However, no informant declared specifically that ghosts capture souls.

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Diseases caused by sorcery are also common. Our informants reported three cases and made four general statements about this source of disease. All the statements and two of the three cases indicate that sorcery involves nonrelatives, but in the case of diseases caused by ghosts the ghost and his victim are usually related. Sorcerers are persons with supernatural power who cause illness by magically shooting some object into their victim. They accomplish this simply by thinking about the person they wish to make ill or else by blowing their breath in his direction. Lowie's various accounts of sorcerers casting their spells differ from the statements of our informants. Lowie describes one sorcerer as spitting into his right palm and clenching his fist. Then he opens his fist, the thumb separated from the fingers (Lowie, 1939, 319). On another occasion, "The sorcerer merely took a bath in the cool of the early morning on four successive days and talked to himself. When ready, he would get within possibly five hundred yards of his victim. Then he would rub some stuff into the palm of his hand till it became invisible. He also took some fine sand and stepped on it with his left foot. His victim would fall sick, and within two days the heart would be knocked out of him without anyone's suspecting the cause, so that he would die.... Some doctors used a different procedure, picking up dust and scattering it toward their enemy with their hands" (Lowie, 1939, 320).

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Some diseases have no supernatural cause and may be treated by anyone with one of the large number of vegetable medicines known to the Washo. However, some of the best of these medicines are gathered by shamans who, in dreams, learn where they grow. The shaman may then sell these medicines or give them away.

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Shamans cure supernaturally caused diseases by means of their powers. The shaman uses a set of implements (wegeléyu) in curing ceremonies. Each shaman dreams of his implements, and these therefore differ slightly among shamans.

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[272] [263] After the child was born, great care was taken to prevent the mother from getting cold. She was given a drink of warm water with "sugar" (šigimba) from the sugar pine. She was then submitted to further pressure by the midwife in order to insure the complete removal of the afterbirth. Some say that she sat up with knees under her chin the first night after the infant was born to effect the final draining.

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[262] [515] The woman could not eat anything except pinenut soup and was not washed until the umbilical cord (ʔiʔip) fell from the child, about four days later. The woman remained in bed about nine or 10 days and had an older woman as an attendant during this period. There were often several women in attendance, but the person designated as midwife handled the baby and tied the cord.

For a month (for a young mother, two months) after the child was born the mother abstained from eating meat, fat, or salt. "A woman who had given birth to four children no longer observed this taboo (Jack)" (Lowie, 1939, [834] 305). The parents abstained from sexual intercourse for up to six to 12 months after a birth. At the end of her confinement the mother bathed, painted herself, and gave away her old clothes.

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[412] The umbilical cord was cut off about 4 in. from the child's abdomen with a stone knife or a sharp cane blade. It was then tied with a string or sinew an inch from the abdomen. After this the baby was washed and the cord [752] bound to the abdomen with a strip of deerskin. Two medicinal roots were applied to the cord. A greasy salve (dɔ́·ša?)[1] was put on next to the abdomen [824] and cottonwood tree bark (tášaʔ ʔí·š) was placed on top of the cord before it was bound down. The cord and medicines were kept moist with water.

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[853] Some say that the baby was not nursed by the mother for two days, but others seem to think there was no delay or that it was given warm water to [757] suck from the end of a rabbit's foot. A baby powder was made from the ashes of the bark of the cottonwood tree. The baby was wrapped in woodchuck or [824] rabbit skins. A grass or bark pad was put under the infant and changed when necessary.

844 After the child had been washed the afterbirth was disposed of. The piece of cord that had been cut off was coiled clockwise, placed back in the amniotic sack on top of the placenta, and the whole carefully wrapped in grass or bark and buried in warm ashes with the cord up. This was done in [842] order that the mother would have more children. Should she not want any more children, the placenta was turned over and buried so the cord was on [754] the bottom and was thus counter-clockwise. The midwife took care that no one watched where she buried the placenta for, if it were destroyed, illness would come to the mother.

[1] From Indian Balsam Leptotaenia dissecta Nutt., according to Juanita Schubert and Personal Communication.

844-[842]

would come to the mother. Or if it were turned over, her wish, either for more children or for none, would be thwarted. The place where the placenta was buried was remembered so it might be turned at any time the woman may change her mind.

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As the placenta was associated with the life of the mother, so the piece of the umbilical cord that fell from the child was associated with the life of the child. This piece of the cord was carefully preserved until a convenient opportunity arose for disposing of it according to custom. The cord of a girl was finally placed in a hole bored in the root of a living sunflower (su·gil).[3] Care was taken that the cord was straight so the child would not have a crooked back. The cord of a boy was placed in the cavity of a short length of the femur of a deer and hung perpendicular from a tree. Stewart's (1941) informants said that the cord was placed on the infant's cradle, and Clara Frank agrees with this. [824] [826]

While the mother was being delivered of her child, the father had to stay away. He could not sit in the doorway of the house, or the baby would not be born easily. As soon as the father heard of the child's birth he took a bath in a nearby stream. Stewart (1941) reported that the bath was given to him by another man, that he ran before the bath, and that the father was forbidden meat, fat and salt during the wife's confinement. Lowie (1939, 305) wrote that "The husband shared his wife's fast only for the first two or three days after the birth, being subsequently free to eat anything." Gambling was also forbidden the father during this period. [844] [525]

A present of a buckskin or other clothes was given by the father to another man after the birth of his child. At the end of the observances he gave away his old clothes, bathed, painted himself red, went hunting, and gave away his first kill. Throughout the confinement the father supplied the wood for the fire. [431]

844 178 [431] [777] 846

In recent times, both baby and mother were bathed the first morning after the baby's birth. The mother cut a small tuft of her own and her baby's hair and gave a small present of dress goods, a handkerchief, or money to any of the women present. This helped to bring good luck. The month of meat taboo is still observed by the more conservative Washo.

The mother used to stay in bed for a long time. She was massaged with a salve (do·ša?) and had red ocher (sawášan) applied to her body. She was instructed not to get up too quickly, and she would exercise a little each day. She would have her hair trimmed on the day of the baby feast (náwnan ?émluhaya?).[4] [757] [302]

3. Wyethia mollis Gray, according to Juanita Schubert, personal communication

4. Literally "she (or they) feed the baby," acc. to William H. Jacobsen, Jr., pers. communication

Washo, NT20
Achomawi NS5

CULTURE ELEM. DISTRIB.: XIV—STEWART: NORTHERN PAIUTE

	Ts	Ki	K2	Ku	To	To	Pa	Wa	At	Sa	Tg	Wd	Ki	AE	
2579. To spirit (sumppo)	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NWA
2580. To night	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	776
2581. Offerings of: food	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	782
2581a. At spring dance	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	
2582. Game	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	
2583. Seeds	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	
2584. Tobacco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	
2585. Shell beads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2586. Offerings: at meals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	
2589. When hunting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	
2590. When 1st seeds gathered	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Guardian Spirits															NWA
2591. Source: childhood dreams	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	787
2592. Adult dreams	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
2593. Various powers received from spirits	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Nonshamanistic Curing															NWA
2594. Special herb doctors	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	757
2595. Blood-letting	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
2596. Sweating	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	
Destiny of Soul															
2597. Spirit goes above, to sky	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
2598. Spirit travels south and up	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
2599. Spirit goes along Milky Way (kusipo)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	
Ghosts or Souls (tsaavu or mugua)															NW
2600. Ghost leaves body: at death	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	775
2601. Shortly before death	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	763
2602. Ghost visible: to anyone	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	
2602a. To doctor only	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	
2603. Ghost audible	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	
2604. Ghost feared	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
2605. Ghost in whirlwind (pitcumava)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
2606. Dreaming of dead is ill omen	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	N
2607. Cold bath to nullify	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	NWA
2608. Prayer to nullify	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
2609. Smoke blown to nullify	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	787
2609a. Specularite (yadupi) sprinkled to nullify	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	
"Wuipo" (possibly Jimsonweed)															N
2613. Properties and name known	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	276
DANCES															NWA
2614. Circle Dance (mugava)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	535
2615. Brush corral	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2616. Performances: at fall rabbit hunt	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
2617. At fall piñon-nut harvest	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	
2618. In spring	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	
2619. In summer	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	N
2620. Purpose: mainly pleasure	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	NW
2621. To make seeds grow	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	[789]

[p. 415]